



Apology... Snell

## Would-be MP 'slap' tweet fury

**BY-ELECTION 1**
**EXCLUSIVE**  
by HARRY COLE

LABOUR'S attempt to hold Stoke Central in an upcoming by-election faced chaos last night after it emerged their candidate once tweeted about hitting a woman.

Gareth Snell sent out a plea in 2011 for Corrie's Deirdre Barlow to be given "a good slap".

It comes just hours after we revealed Snell had branded Loose Women panellists "squabbling sour-faced ladies".

Ukip – whose leader Paul Nuttall hopes to take the seat on February 23 in the contest triggered by the resignation of Labour's Tristram Hunt – said the comments were "distasteful".

The party's equalities spokesman Margot Parker said: "This man is obviously a fool and a bully." Snell last night said he was deeply sorry for the Corrie tweet.

## Labour's poll-axed

**BY-ELECTION 2**

THERESA May is set for her first by-election victory after polling revealed that almost a third of Labour voters in Cope-land are deserting Jeremy Corbyn's party.

Sources claim canvas returns show just 70 per cent of those who voted Labour at the 2015 General Election will plug for Labour on February 23.

Tories are so confident that the PM will make a personal appearance to the Cumbrian constituency dominated by the Sellafield nuclear plant.

Conservative campaigners have played on Corbyn's anti-nuclear views.

Bookies are pricing the Tories at 4/9 odds on.

## CLIMATE BELIEF

Nearly two-thirds of Brits say climate change is happening and largely man-made, a poll found.

# SECURITY HQ OPENS

# TWO UK CYBER ATTACKS A DAY

## Serious threats rising, warns Hammond

**By HARRY COLE**  
Westminster Correspondent

**NEW cyber defences are fending off two "serious" hacks each day on Government, infrastructure or businesses.**

The Chancellor will warn today that the attacks are increasing in frequency, severity and sophistication.

Speaking at the opening of the National Cyber Security Centre,

**Threats... Hammond**

**188**  
serious attacks fended off by new cyber HQ in its first 3mths

Philip Hammond will say: "In the first three months of its existence the NCSC has already mobilised to respond to attacks on 188 occa-

sions." The high security centre in central London will be officially opened by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

And Mr Hammond will

urge business to "sharpen its approach as the threat increases and intensifies" after the Government injected £1.9 billion into the scheme.

The centre will work with firms to keep the country safe after two thirds of large businesses had a cyber breach or attack in the last year.

Ministers will also announce Industry 100, in which 100 experts from the private sector will be hired.

The centre's chief executive Ciaran Martin said: "We will help secure our critical services, lead the response to the most serious incidents and improve the underlying security of the internet."

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UK fan... Barrow

## BoJo: I'll get back Gambia

BORIS Johnson will today vow to ensure the Gambia returns to the Commonwealth quickly. It left in 2013, branding the group a "neo-colonial institution".

But new President "No Drama" Adama Barrow, who once worked as an Argos guard in London, wants to reverse that.

Launching a two-day visit to Africa, Foreign Secretary Mr Johnson will hail Brexit Britain's links with the continent.

Last night he said: "I'm very pleased that Gambia wants to rejoin – and we will ensure this happens in the coming months."

## Euro lift for Brexit

RED-faced Brussels was yesterday forced to raise Brexit Britain's growth forecast, months after a doom-laden prediction.

The European Commission said the UK's economy would grow 1.5 per cent this year, up from 1 per cent in November.

## CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

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## Lags get let off hits

LAGS now get softer sentences if they thump a jail guard, figures reveal.

They got 16 extra days for assaults in 2015, down from 20 in 2010, said the Ministry of Justice. Tory MP Philip Davies said it was "outrageous".

*The Sun Says – Page Ten*

## PM'S PRESSED

THERESA May was on the defensive last night over plans to cage investigative journalists for up to 14 years.

A Law Commission report hints at the penalty for "someone who obtains and gathers" info. Critics blasted it as

**By STEVE HAWKES**

a fresh war on the press. The PM's spokesman said: "We'd not do anything to restrict the freedom of journalists to go about their business professionally."

*The Sun Says – Page Ten*

## Expats in backlash

**EXPAT Brits in the EU face a Brexit backlash, a leaked memo warns. Individual states will decide if Brits can still live there after 2019, says the document.**

## SCHOOL 'TEST'

**By LYNN DAVIDSON**

PUPILS should have to pass more than a one-off exam to get into grammar school, MPs declared yesterday.

The cross-party Commons Education Select Committee believes the move could help kids from poorer families

secure places. It called on ministers to make the admissions system "tutor proof".

It follows fears that rich families can beat the system by paying for extra tuition.

# AVALANCHE KILLS SKI 4

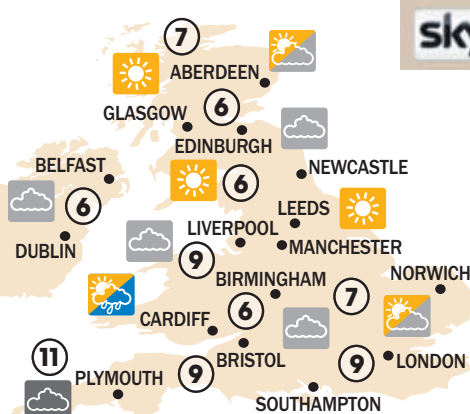
**By NICK PARKER, Chief Foreign Correspondent**

**FOUR snowboarders died and five others were missing last night after an avalanche at a resort popular with British skiers.**

The victims were off-piste near Tignes in France when a wall of snow triggered by skiers higher up hit them. The dead, all said to be French, included a dad and son, 15. Rescuers said hopes of finding survivors were "slim".



Search... rescuers yesterday


**sky NEWS HD**
**WEATHER with NAZANEEN GHAFAR**
**WED 8°**
**THU 9°**
**FRI 10°**

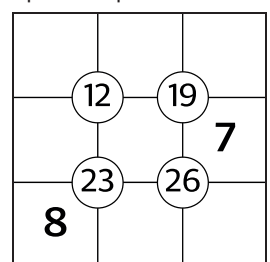
**TODAY:** Northern and eastern areas will be dry with sunny spells. Elsewhere, cloud will spread slowly from the South West, with patchy rain affecting south-western England and south Wales. Light to moderate winds. Milder.

**TONIGHT:** Cloudy with outbreaks of rain or drizzle in central and western areas. Clear spells in the South East, with patches of mist.

**OUTLOOK:** Showery bursts will spread from the West, brightening in the afternoon. Thursday will be dull and cloudy with spells of rain across Scotland. Brighter in eastern England.

## SUJIKO

To play, enter the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so each circle's total equals the sum of the 4 adjacent squares. See p39 for solution.


**PUZZLES: PAGE 39**

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## Today's birthdays

Shaun Of The Dead co-writer and Star Trek's Scotty **SIMON PEGG**, 47, above left, former Manchester United winger **ANGEL DI MARIA**, 29, Spurs midfielder **CHRISTIAN ERIKSEN**, 25, British film director **ALAN PARKER**, 73, and singer **BECKY HILL**, 23, above right.